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John Wilson

MR. LINCOLN'S ADDRESS

AT

BLOODY BROOK.



AN

A D D R E S S

DELIVERED AT SOUTH DEERFIELD,

AUGUST 31, 1838,

ON THE COMPLETION OF THE

BLOODY BROOK MONUMENT,

ERECTED IN MEMORY OF

CAPT. LOTHROP AND HIS ASSOCIATES,

WHO FELL AT THAT SPOT,

SEPTEMBER 18, (O. S.) 1675.

BY LUTHER B. LINCOLN.

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ADDRESS.

IF there be any sentiment of universal acceptance with mankind, it is the memory of buried worth. Of all feelings this seems to command our highest respect and most unbounded sympathy. The world appreciates the admiration of departed virtue, and the grateful offering on the tomb of merit is considered as savory incense, in the sight of Heaven and earth. The jealousies of party, the antipathies of country, the prejudices of the age, the associations of limited esteem, here lose their influence ; and the worshipper, in freedom of spirit, pours forth his homage unrestrained. Who thinks of inquiring to what quarter of the universe the visiter at the grave of Howard owes his origin, or in which of the thousand languages of the earth he utters his gratitude ? Who pauses to ask, whether the footstep at Vernon's Mound is made by an inhabitant of the Old or New World, ere he can measure the depth of feeling, or the soul's veneration ? It is sufficient, that an intelligent being, a lover of virtue, is there ; you know that his offering will be pure and fervent. Who dares to limit the admiration of an Eliot to his country's boundaries ? The dust of that devoted Indian apostle is dear to the world ; nor land, nor sea shall circumscribe the memory of his virtues.

The truth of this sentiment, I believe, is not doubted. Indeed, it has been said, that living virtue commands universal respect ; that merit needs but be known to be admired. I would not combat the assertion. Yet it is certainly true, that

the veil of passion, in which the beholder's spirit is wrapped, is often so dark, that merit cannot be seen through it, and therefore genuine worth is unacknowledged, unadmired. It would seem to require the influence of another world—the sublimity of the grave—the light of immortality—to break through this covering of prejudice, and array the character of the noble one in its true dignity. When the “father of our country” was spending the vigor of life in freedom's cause, amid the toils of camp and horrors of war, the sufferings of body and sorrows of mind, straining nerve and sinew, as scarce ever did man before, in defence of human right, exercising, from day to day, an unparalleled prudence, and governed by a purity of purpose almost angelic, many an eye looked evil, and darted a jealous glance on that elevated virtue. But, when the “tabernacle of flesh” was taken down, ere dust had mingled with its kindred, the clouds which had hovered around that brow were dissipated. Friend and foe, citizen and stranger, united to support his bright reputation; and his splendid fame and pre-eminent virtues commanded the admiration of mankind.

In addition to the happy influence which another world reflects on the memory of departed worth, the lapse of time contributes, not a little, to heighten our respect and veneration. As in the vision of the poet,

“’Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,”

so, in our contemplation of real worth, age seems to mellow the light that has been cast around the scenes of suffering and triumphant virtue, communicating a richness—a majestic serenity—which nothing else could impart. The sea-girt Isles of Greece, and the shores of the elden Tiber may, indeed, be interesting as theatres of natural

beauty, as the lands of skilful art and intellect refined, of taste and genius, of hero and of sage ; but how much has antiquity done to add glory to those scenes, and invest them with that peculiar interest which all the embellishment of modern times could not inspire ! The poets of latter days have been singing in strains of earthly and of heavenly music ; yet the trees have not come down from the mountain, to listen, as to the lyre of Orpheus. No second Helicon has been opened. Philosophy has lifted her honored head, clad in the purified vesture of civilization and refinement, and claiming for her pedestal, Christian morality and truth ; yet, is she lauded to the skies, as in days of yore ? The enchantment of the Academic Grove, the magic of the Grecian Portico is wanting—a structure, which we cannot rear. Military science, too, has kept pace with the march of the world. The earth has been the continued theatre of what is denominated warlike glory—courage, fortitude, patriotism ; but time only, with its wizard wand, can create a second Marathon, or model the crown, which sat on the brow of Leonidas.

It is not, however, distant antiquity alone, which produces this effect. When comparatively few years have intervened, even those few leave their impress on the scene. Two centuries and some years only have elapsed, since our fathers were shivering on the rock of Plymouth ; yet, what a feeling of increased veneration comes over the visiter, when, standing on that memorable spot, he turns his eye to the fore-fathers' burying ground, where, for generations, has slept the last of the pilgrim band. It is a short antiquity, “ that lends enchantment to the view,” inspiring a sentiment, breathed upon us by Deity's command, and not in vain nor thoughtlessly to be disturbed.

Such, fellow citizens and friends, are the influences, which seem to mingle with our feelings in this commemorative scene. Events so full of consequence, revolutions so momentous have transpired, the aspect of nature has so changed, yea, all but the blue of heaven has so altered, as to make us feel, not only that a short, nay, long antiquity has intervened between the present hour and that of the bloody spectacle once presented here, but, that, in truth, we must be inhabitants of another world.

Under these happy influences, beneath this beautiful canopy of our Father's power, these cheering beams of the emblem of His love, and amid the grateful offerings of His children, we come to dedicate this monument to departed worth.

“YE PATRIOT DEAD, whose ashes lie
Interred, beneath this smiling sky,
TO YOU THIS MONUMENT WE REAR,
And memory sheds a grateful tear.”

The last breath of summer is departing ; her rose is fading ; but the “Flower of Essex” revives, in autumnal grace, to bloom forever.

The origin of the act, in which we thus participate, I briefly describe in the language of that venerated citizen, who has, so happily, taken the white and the red man by the hand, and taught them to walk together as familiar acquaintances.

“We assemble, my fellow citizens, to commemorate an event, which occurred on this ground, on the 18th of September, 1675, (old style,) which, according to the Gregorian Calendar, corresponds with the 30th of September.

Capt. Thomas Lothrop was one of the early emigrants from England, who took up his residence in Beverly, then a part of Salem, in the county of Essex. In the early part of Philip's war,

Lothrop was selected to take charge of a company of infantry, in the Massachusetts forces, and ordered to the western frontier of the then province. The company was raised, or, as the historian Hubbard expresses it, culled out of the towns in the county of Essex. At this time, the country, now embraced in the county of Worcester, was infested by the hostile Indians, and Lothrop's company performed much hard service, at, and in the vicinity of Brookfield, and made extensive marches through the northern woods, in search of the enemy. When Philip, driven from that part of the country, fell back to the Connecticut river, and took up his quarters at, and about Northfield, Lothrop's company and Capt. Beers', another from the eastern part of the province, were ordered to Hadley, to protect the inhabitants in that quarter.

In the expedition from Hadley to Deerfield, to bring off the stores in the latter place, Lothrop volunteered his services, and, on his return, fell into an ambuscade of seven hundred or eight hundred Indians, at that place, and was slain, with the principal part of his men. The details of this action, though but a faint picture of the horrid scene, may be found in the histories of Philip's war.

Not long after the massacre of Lothrop's company, our fathers, impelled by a laudable sympathy, erected a rude monument near the spot, to perpetuate the memory of the slain ; but time has delapidated it, and this slab is its only vestige.

The recent discovery of the grave, and the erection of a new monument, will excite the sympathy of the traveller ; and the antiquary, while he shudders at the tragedy here acted, will find much to gratify his avidity, at this Bloody Brook.

Long have the residents of this soil travelled

over this hallowed spot, unconscious that they were treading on the graves of the fallen heroes. The story of the sufferers, though oft repeated by their fathers, had nearly lost its thrilling effect, and the peaceful aspect of the adjacent fields tells not, that once they were watered by the precious blood of brave men. New inquiries will now be excited, and future generations will point to this ground, and their children will know where their fathers bled to secure to them the rich boon they possess ; where the nightly howl of the wolf, the scream of the panther, and the yell of the red warrior pierced the ear from the dark-tangled woods, and the mother, with fearful hands, barred the door of her log hut, and clasped her little ones to her bosom, imploring protecting aid, which man could not interpose.

From this day the heroes of Essex will be remembered by all, ‘ who are not indifferent and unmoved, when conducted over ground that has been dignified by bravery and virtue.’ ”

“ ‘ Still, still as they sleep, freed from war’s dread commotion,
 Their offspring, for ages, around them shall weep ;
 And the tears of their sons, as they kneel in devotion,
 Shall hallow the turf, where their fore-fathers sleep.’ ”

To these patriotic sentiments I may add a brief description of the Monument.

Its material, with the exception of the lower base, is the Berkshire clouded marble, cut from the quarry at Lanesboro, Mass. and brought to this place, in its rough state, to receive the form and polish of the artist. The structure rests upon a mass of solid stone-work, sunk to the depth of six feet from the surface of the ground. This foundation supports the lower base of the pedestal—a block of Wendell granite, 6 ft. sq., 1 ft. thick, weighing 6200 pounds. Upon this rests a middle base of marble, 4 ft. 9 in. sq. and 9 in.

thick, weighing 4300 pounds. This supports a
 third, upper base, or plinth, 3 ft. 8 in. sq. and 6 in. thick, weighing 1000 pounds, with a depression in each side, 4 inches in depth and 12 inches in length. Upon this stands the die, or main part of the pedestal, containing the inscription, 4 ft. 6 in. in height, 2 ft. 4 in. sq., weighing 4300 pounds—a block of solid marble, supported, at the corners, by four columns, 8 in. wide, weighing 300 pounds each. The pedestal is capped by a slab, or sur-base, 3 ft. 8 in. sq., 4 in. thick, weighing 600 pounds, with depressions similar to those in the plinth. Upon the sur-base rests the lower base of the column or shaft, 5 ft. sq., 8 in. thick, weighing 3200 pounds. This supports a middle base, 3 ft. 8 in. sq., 6 in. thick, weighing 700 pounds; and the latter a third, or upper base, 2 ft. 6 in. sq., 4 in. thick, weighing 400 pounds, and surmounted by the shaft, or pyramidal spire, 11 ft. in height, 2 ft. sq., at the bottom, 10 in. at the top, weighing 3150 pounds. The whole weight of the structure, therefore, above the foundation, is 25050 pounds; its height, to the slope of the apex, 19 ft. 7 in., which, added to the elevation of the mound, 3 ft. 9 in., makes the whole height 23 ft. 4 in. above the adjacent street.

The expense of the monument (including \$150 paid for the ground) will be, I understand, about \$700; a very frugal sum if we consider the worth of the sleepers, or the beauty of their memorial.

On the lower part and south side of the column, are inscribed these words:

“This Monument erected August 1838.”

On the south side of the die is the following inscription, prepared by Gen. Hoyt.

“On this ground Capt. Thomas Lothrop and eighty-four men under his command, including eighteen teamsters from Deerfield, conveying stores from that town to Hadley, were ambus-

caded by about 700 Indians, and the Capt. and 76 men were slain, Sept. 18, 1675, old style."

"The soldiers who fell were described by a cotemporary historian, as a 'choice company of young men, the very flower of the county of Essex, none of whom were ashamed to meet the enemy in the gate.'"

"And SANGUINETTO tells ye where the dead
Made the earth wet, and turned the unwilling waters red."

"The grave of the slain is marked by a stone slab, 21 rods southerly of this Monument."

The second clause of the inscription was suggested by George T. Davis, Esq., of Greenfield; the couplet, from Childe Harold, by the Rev. Mr. Fessenden of Deerfield. The passage, with the lines that precede it, reads very appropriately:

"Far other scene is Thrasymene now;
Her lake a sheet of silver, and her plain
Rent by no ravage, save the gentle plough;
Her aged trees lie thick as once the slain
Lay where their roots are; but a brook hath ta'en—
A little rill of scanty stream and bed—
A name of blood from that day's sanguine rain;
And Sanguinetto tells ye where the dead
Made the earth wet, and turn'd the unwilling waters red."

Canto IV. Stanza LXV.

The monument was shaped by the hand of Mr. Martin Woods of Sunderland, Mass., whose correctness and skill have been exhibited, I am informed, to the entire satisfaction, and even praise, of the supervising Committee. To the zeal of this architect, also, one of that Committee observes, may be attributed, in a good degree, the existence of the structure.

The model, conceived and fashioned by native ingenuity, was furnished by Mr. Hopkins Woods; and was selected, I learn, from many beautiful designs, offered both by native artists, and foreigners now resident in our own country—a pleasing tribute to the taste and talent of that

youthful spirit, which has imbibed its love of fair proportion, within sight of our own Sugar Loaf.

The several gentlemen of the Committees, appointed to superintend the erection of the Bloody Brook Monument, and especially, I am informed, those of the Building Committee, assisted by Gen. Hoyt, have been laboring indefatigably, since the early part of 1835, to complete this structure, as a tribute due to the memory of the dead. Together with all, who have contributed, or aided in this work, whether by money, labor or sympathy, these gentlemen deserve the commendation, the thanks, the fervent gratitude of our common country ; and if, in this land, there be a heart, that withholds its sympathy, let the spirits of the honored dead take note, that their deeds are not forgotten.

Does any one here ask why not rebuild the old monument, and restore this memorial of our fathers to its former estate, hallowed, as it is, by antiquity ? It is, indeed, ancient and venerable, and, we trust, will be preserved with all the respect due to the labors of our ancestors. But, the existence of that olden slab precludes not the propriety or importance of the structure we now rear. Will you inform me, why it is, that the settler in a new country, after a few years of successful industry, leaves the old cabin, which had sheltered him in time of need, for the more finished dwelling ? The log hut, it may be, was a comfortable habitation ; its well-fitted joints and closely thatched roof protected its inmates ; the cheerful blaze curled in the rude chimney ; the merry accents of love resounded ; and all the heaven-born associations of home clustered around the plain abode. Why does the possessor wish to exchange it ? When the body of one we love is cold in death, why do we not commit the mouldering relics to a tenement made of the rough ma-

terial, instead of the planed, painted, adorned receptacle ? The former habitation would be equally comfortable for the sleeper ; and the light of immortality would shine upon it, with equal brightness and glory. Why this expenditure of time and money ? Why does the God of Nature, when He wishes to perfume the air, so often shape the leaf in elegance, and pencil it in beauty, when an unadorned surface, perhaps, would diffuse equal fragrance ? The voice of gratitude and affection must answer, and that will tell, why this more elaborate, yet simple structure is raised in the place of the ruder, yet not less honorable memorial of our fathers.

We would trust, that the inhabitants of this village and posterity will look on both these structures with much and equal regard, and feel towards them, as Byron makes the Italian villagers toward the mansion and sepulchre of their favorite Petrarch :

“ They keep his dust in Argua, where he died ;
 _____ and 'tis their pride—
 An honest pride—and let it be their praise,
 To offer to the passing stranger's gaze
 His mansion and his sepulchre ; both plain
 And venerably simple—_____”

What more, friends and citizens, shall I add ? Shall I, true to the letter of history, say, in the language of Drake, and Hubbard, as quoted by Drake : “ It was a great oversight that Capt. Lothrop should have suffered his men to stroll about, while passing a dangerous defile ; ‘ many of the soldiers having been so foolish and secure as to put their arms in the carts, and step aside to gather grapes, which proved dear and deadly grapes to them. This was a black and fatal day, wherein there were eight persons made widows, and six and twenty children made fatherless. all in one little plantation, and in one day.’ ”

It was, undoubtedly, a great oversight ; and so it was in the veteran Braddock : and so it has been, in the most renowned generals and distinguished disciplinarians of Europe. Who is not guilty of this weakness ? Let the heart, unconscious of infirmity, deny us its sympathy, and the dead its grateful offering. It is true, also, that they were foolish and secure. This is human nature. Let him, who is not so, approach this slab, and write upon it ‘unworthy.’ It was in the prosecution of a war, too, they fell, not, we fear, of self defence, but of extermination to the native. I have no faith nor sympathy in the justice of such a cause, believing, as I do, in the forcible language of another, “that it is, always, more righteous and honorable to comfort widows and orphans, than to make them, to save life than to kill, to cover the earth with knowledge, than to deluge it with blood.” It is an awful thing—this reckless mangling of the human body—and it pains my soul to feel, while standing on this spot, that, had another Penn, actuated by elevated moral principle and benevolence, been here, and influenced the destinies of this Commonwealth, not a leaf of the “Flower of Essex” might have been tarnished by a blood-drop. Let us not be unjust, my friends, to fallen greatness. How often do we learn from the cradle to contemplate the warrior Philip, as savage in feeling and brutal in affection, as well as terrible in ferocity and deadly in revenge. But Philip was a noble chief. He fought and bled, in the defence of his kin and country ; in a war, which, I am compelled to believe, may be attributed to the white man’s cupidity.

“Philip,” says George Bancroft, “was hurried into his rebellion, and he is reported to have wept, as he heard, that a white man’s blood had been shed. He had kept his men about him, and had welcomed every stranger, and now, against his

judgment and his will, he was involved in war. For what prospect had he of success? Destiny had marked him and his tribe. The individual, growing giddy by danger, rushes, as it were, to his fate; so did the Indians of New England. Frenzy prompted their rising. They rose without hope, and, therefore, fought without mercy. For them, as a nation, there was no to-morrow."

"Would the tribes of New England permit the nation, that had first given a welcome to the English, to perish unavenged? Desolation extended along the whole frontier. Banished from his patrimony, where the English found a friend, and from his cabin, which had sheltered the exiles, Philip, with his warriors, spread through the country, awakening their brethren to a war of extermination."

Yes, I repeat, Philip was a noble chief—the king of a noble race—and we would not come up, to-day, with our sacrifice to the honored dead, forgetful of the Royal Tenant of Mount Hope.

Thus, friends and citizens, having presented the dark side of the picture, I will reverse it, and then leave it for your contemplation.

The inscription tells us that these men "were none of them afraid to meet the enemy in the gate." Verily, they were brave men, or this soil would never have been the theatre of such a scene; nor would these encircling hills have echoed to the repeated discharge of the English gun. They were eminently brave men, or they would have done as the soldiers of Braddock did, at the battle of the Monongahela, in 1756, when led into a similar ambuscade between two defiles of Indians, concealed in the ravines on either side. "The troops," said Col. Washington, "broke and fled like wild bears from the wood." This was the instinct of humanity. They fled, because impelled by terror—that sovereign passion, which at times loosens the manly joints, and

makes pale even the countenance of the brave. But, my friends, physical courage, though in the estimation of the soldier, almost a passport to glory, is not, methinks, comparatively, a very elevated virtue. It is too much the creature of circumstance to be meritorious. Said one of Napoleons's great officers; "I can face the cannon's mouth undaunted, but dare not confront my own feelings." No, if physical bravery were the only sentiment here exhibited, feebleness still would be our praise. The men, whose ashes here repose, were distinguished for one of the noblest traits of the human character—self-devotion to what they believed to be their country's good—a virtue, to which all ages have rendered homage. They were indeed self-devoted, or they would never have left their peaceful firesides, for the horrid alarms of this western frontier. They would never have turned from the silken crests of their waving fields, to the tangled wood of this frightful wilderness. They never could have burst from the tender arms, which clung around them in their beloved homes, to grapple the brawny sinew of the unsparing savage; nor turned from the gentle accents of love to the appalling cries of wild revenge. Oh, that yell of deadly hate! What was the sound? for poesy says,

"Those war-whoops ring in fancy's ear!"

What likeness does fancy give? What picture, think ye, she could afford of that countenance, on which the venerated Williams was called to look when roused from slumber, on the memorable morn of the 1st of March, 1704? What conception does fancy give to the peaceful bosoms before me, of the awful sound, which chilled the blood around the mother's heart, as it "awoke the cries of the cradle?" No more just idea, than the pleading of the infant gives of the agitating roar of the king of the forest. What pic-

ture does fancy present to these eyes, accustomed to the charms of cultivated nature, of that interminable wilderness, which, after enveloping the spot where we stand, in a gloomy swamp, extended, on the one hand, to the farthest verge of the county of Worcester, and, on the other, to the waters of the Hudson ? with a few patches of Indian tillage to interrupt the dismal waste, and the little village of Brookfield alone to mark the footstep of civilization. When the placid stream of the Connecticut watered no hamlet upon its banks, between the almost forsaken town of Old Deerfield and the distant Canadas, save the deserted settlement at Northfield. When the highway, in which we stand, and which seems to us to have been here forever, formed a part of the dreary wild : and every green plat was the habitation of a forest tree ; and every tree concealed an Indian ; and every Indian's hand grasped a bloody weapon ; on every Indian's face was pictured the curse of the white man ; and in every Indian's bosom a flame was kindled, to be extinguished only by the death of its victim.

Such was the theatre, on which these fallen heroes were called to act their dark tragedy. Friends and citizens, this is hallowed ground, and these are consecrated ashes. Patriotism—eminent patriotism was here ; and in behalf of this virtue, we claim your respect and sympathy. When yonder eminence shall be hurled from its base, let this structure, also, crumble. But, till then, let it stand, honored and admired. May no ruthless arm mar its proportions—no barbarous weapon rob a tittle of its surface—no unguarded finger soil its purity—but may even time, which is wont to move with so heavy footstep, here, as the “ beautifier of the dead,” leave a mark of veneration only, and tread gently on this simple MEMENTO OF THE “ FLOWER OF ESSEX”.

COMMITTEES.

The several Committees, appointed to superintend the concerns of the Bloody Brook Monument, so far as I am informed, have been composed of the following gentlemen, from the five towns constituting Old Deerfield, in those ancient days of more generous, but, perhaps, unwieldy boundaries : Deerfield, including Bloody Brook, Greenfield, Gill, Conway and Shelburne.

FROM DEERFIELD STREET (to commence with the parent and proceed to the offspring)—Gen. Epaphras Hoyt, Consider Dickinson, Esq., Maj. Dennis Stebbins, Pliny Arms, Esq., Stephen W. Williams, M. D.

BLOODY BROOK—Amos Russell, Esq., Stephen Whitney, Esq., Dennis Arms, Esq.

GREENFIELD—Hon. George Grennell, Jr., Hon. James C. Alvord, George T. Davis, Esq.

CONWAY—Gen. Asa Howland, Dr. Washington Hamilton.

GILL—Col. Seth Howland, Isaac Chenery, Esq.

SHELburne—Col. David Wells, Apollos Barnard, Esq.

THE LOCATING COMMITTEE—Gen. Epaphras Hoyt, Stephen W. Williams, M. D., Amos Russell, Esq., Eli Cooley, Esq., Stephen Whitney, Ira Billings, Esq., Eli Cooley, Jr. Esq., James Whitney, Esq., George T. Davis, Esq.

THE BUILDING COMMITTEE—Dr. Stephen W. Williams, Amos Russell, Esq., Stephen Whitney, Esq., George T. Davis, Esq.

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